

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9821

S E C R E T SEOUL 3090

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS CINCPAC FOR ADMIRAL GAYLER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, KS, KN

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PARK: MISSILE STRATEGY

REF: SEOUL 3061

SUMMARY: DURING APRIL 30 MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR, PRESIDENT PARK SET FORTH HIS DETERMINATION DEVELOP KOREAN MISSILE PRODUCTION CAPABILITY. ADDITIONALLY, HE OUTLINED STRATEGY OF COUNTERACTING NORTH KOREAN AIR SUPERIORITY WITH MISSILE ATTACKS ON NORTH KOREAN AIR FIELDS AND MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS. BOTH POLICIES WERE PREMISED ON POSSIBILITY US FORCES WITHDRAWAL FROM KOREA. AMBASSADOR URGED, AND PRESIDENT AGREED, FULL CONSULTATIONS WITH USG ON BOTH SUBJECTS. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING DISCUSSION OF POSTPONEMENT I CORPS DISESTABLISHMENT (REFTEL), PRESIDENT PARK RAISED WITH ME US FAILURE TO AGREE TO LOCKHEED PROPELLANT PLANT. I POINTED OUT USG HAD RECEIVED NUMBER OF SEPARATE REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE RELATED TO DEVELOPMENT OF MISSILE PRODUCTION CAPABILITY IN KOREA. THESE REQUESTS OFTEN INVOLVED EXPORT OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY, RATHER THAN HARDWARE, WHICH USG CLOSELY CONTROLLED EVEN TO MORE ADVANCED COUNTRIES SUCH AS JAPAN AND WESTERN EUROPE. US HAS STRONG COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN THIS FIELD WHICH WE WISH TO RETAIN. IN CASE  
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OF KOREAN REQUESTS, WE HAD NO CLEAR CONCEPT OF LONGER TERM KOREAN PLANS TO PROVIDE A BASIS FOR MUTUALLY AGREEABLE ASSISTANCE. I SUGGESTED THAT, WITH A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF KOREAN PLANS, DECISIONS ON INDIVIDUAL ITEMS MIGHT BE

FACILITATED.

2. PRESIDENT PARK AGREED TO ADVISE ME OF FULL KOREAN PROGRAM AND PLANS FOR YEARS AHEAD. HE SAID HE WOULD HAVE ADD PRESIDENT SHIM GET IN TOUCH WITH ME. HE THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT SHIM HAD BEEN DIRECTED TO DEVELOP AN IN-COUNTRY MISSILE CAPABILITY WITHIN THE NEXT THREE TO FIVE YEARS WHILE US FORCES STILL IN KOREA. IF THE US WAS NOT PREPARED TO ASSIST, THEN KOREA WOULD SEEK AID FROM THIRD COUNTRIES. WHILE RECOGNIZING FINANCIAL BURDEN PLACED UPON KOREA, PRESIDENT SAID KOREA "MUST BE PREPARED FOR RAINY DAY." IT WOULD BE TOO LATE IF KOREA WAITED TO DEVELOP ITS MISSILE CAPACITY UNTIL US INFORMS ROKG THAT IT PLANS TO WITHDRAW ITS FORCES.

3. I POINTED OUT TO PRESIDENT PARK VERY LARGE FINANCIAL COSTS INVOLVED IN FIELD OF MISSILE DEVELOPMENT AND THAT PREFERABLE COURSE IS WORKING WITH US.

4. IN DESCRIBING HIS BROADER PLANS FOR DEFENSE PRODUCTION, PRESIDENT STATED THAT:

A. ROKG HAS NO REPEAT NO PLANS TO DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS:

B. ROKG DOES NOT PLAN TO DEVELOP LATEST TYPE FIGHTER MILITARY AIRCRAFT, BUT IS INTERESTED IN CO-ASSEMBLY PROJECTS IF THE FINANCIAL COSTS ARE NOT MUCH GREATER THAN BUYING AIRCRAFT DIRECTLY FROM US PRODUCTION:

C. IN OTHER AREAS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT, ROKG WISHES DEVELOP ITS OWN CAPABILITIES AND IS HAVING SOME SUCCESS ALREADY.

5. PRESIDENT PARK THEN EXPLAINED HIGH PRIORITY GIVEN TO MISSILE CAPABILITY. IN FIRST PLACE, NORTH KOREA HAS MISSILES CAPABLE OF ATTACKING SEOUL AND ROK NEEDS RETALIATORY WEAPONS. SECONDLY, NORTH KOREA HAS CONSIDERABLY MORE FIGHTER AIRCRAFT THAN ROKG WITH NUMBERS INCREASING. WHILE ROKG AIR FORCE EXPANDING, IT HAS NO HOPE OF MATCHING NUMBER  
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OF NORTH KOREAN AIRCRAFT DUE TO HIGH COST. ONLY ALTERNATIVE FOR ROKG IS MISSILES TO COUNTER NORTH KOREAN AIR FORCE SUPERIORITY WITH RANGE SUFFICIENT TO ATTACK PYONGYANG AND WONSAN AS WELL AS NORTH KOREAN AIR FIELDS. THUS, IF NORTH KOREA LAUNCHES SURPRISE ATTACK, ROK WILL COUNTER NOT WITH AIRCRAFT BUT WITH MISSILES. FINALLY, ROK MISSILE CAPABILITY SHOULD IN FACT BE SUFFICIENT TO CONTAIN AND PREVENT NORTH KOREAN ATTACK.

6. IN CONCLUSION PARK STATED THAT ROKG IS DETERMINED TO BUILD UP SELF-RELIANCE IN DEFENSE PRODUCTION, PARTICULARLY MISSILE CAPABILITY, TO PREPARE FOR DAY WHEN US LEAVES. ROKG EXPECTS FULL MEASURE OF US SUPPORT FOR THESE PLANS. I

SOUGHT TO COUNTER AGAIN PARK'S CONCERNS REGARDING US WITHDRAWAL AND SUGGESTED THAT, RATHER THAN MAKING ANY INITIAL COMMENT ON HIS MISSILE STRATEGY, THIS SUBJECT SHOULD BE DISCUSSED AT THE FORTHCOMING SECURITY CONSULTATIVE MEETING. GIVEN ITS IMPORTANCE AND MAJOR US MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN KOREA, STRATEGY DECISIONS OF THIS NATURE SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO MUTUAL AGREEMENT. PARK INDICATED HIS HASTE TO MOVE AHEAD MORE RAPIDLY AND SAID THAT HE WOULD ASK DEFENSE MINISTER TO BRIEF ME ON THIS STRATEGY IN GREATER DETAIL SO THAT I MIGHT INFORM WASHINGTON QUICKLY.

7. COMMENT: IN THIS AND PREVIOUS CONVERSATION PRESIDENT PARK HAS UNVEILED MORE EXPLICITLY HIS PROGRAM FOR DEVELOPING KOREAN SELF-RELIANCE ON CONTINGENCY OF US WITHDRAWAL. ONCE MORE HE HAS MADE CLEAR HIS EXPECTATION OF PROBABLE WITHDRAWAL ALONG WITH PLANS FOR URGENT DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-RELIANT DEFENSE INDUSTRY DURING REMAINING YEARS OF US FORCES DEPLOYMENT TO KOREA. I CAN ONLY URGE THAT THIS PARK POLICY BE GIVEN THE FULLEST AND EARLIEST CONSIDERATION AS MAJOR ASPECT OF OVERALL KOREAN POLICY REVIEW I HAVE PREVIOUSLY SUGGESTED. GIVEN CURRENT ATTITUDES WITHIN CONGRESS, WE CANNOT IGNORE EITHER PARK'S CONCERNS REGARDING US WITHDRAWAL OR HIS PLANS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE. IT SHOULD BE FEASIBLE TO DEVELOP A US POLICY WHICH GIVES ROK REASONABLE SENSE OF SECURITY IN EFFECTIVE DEFENSE OF KOREA EVEN IN CONTINGENCY OF US WITHDRAWAL, WHILE AVOIDING RISKS OF NK-SK ESCALATION IN MISSILE AND OTHER AREAS OF HIGH TECHNOLOGY.

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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CINCPAC.

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## Message Attributes

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